

How social influence affects beliefs and behaviors

Sociology



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HOW SOCIAL INFLUENCE AFFECTS BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS Family is a primary unit of the society where the first socialization is accorded to children. Whatever norms, values or customs that are upheld in one particular home have an enormous influence on the behavior and beliefs of its members. I will focus on my home life and how it has influenced me towards group conformity. I am from a family of parents who can be termed as great disciplinarians, and whenever I come across the famous quote, “ spare the rod and spoil the child,” it rings a clear bell to me. This demonstrates how my parents were no nonsense people if you misbehaved; however they also had their other side of embracing and encouraging good behaviors in us. Dodson (1923) states that positive consequences are used to encourage desirable behaviors. According to Hurlock (1949), it is necessary to have negative rewards to prevent or discourage certain problematic behaviors in children. My home life of rewards and punishments has shaped me to be a cautious person desiring to do the right things always. Group conformity refers to the act of changing one’s opinion or behavior due to pressure from a particular group. When one complies with the demands of a group irrespective of their consequences or morality, then one is said to be conforming. Note that groups can either influence one towards morality or immorality. My home life has shaped my personality and I cannot do things because others are doing them. I have to think about each action and its consequences, and whether it is generally acceptable or not. I have learnt that it is appropriate for one to reason before taking any action or indulging in any group behavior; look before you leap is my motto. Further, home life has inculcated in me a culture of taking responsibility for my actions and I only allow groups to influence me positively and not

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negatively. I believe that being focused will help me to be a relevant and a responsible member of the society.

References

Hurlock, E. B. (1949). *Child Growth and Development* (5th ed.). New York: Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Company.

Dodson, F. (1977). *How to Discipline With Love*. New York: Rawson Associates Publishers, Inc.